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AUTHOR Bruhn, Thea C.
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ABSTRACT

A survey of the status of language usage in Senegal begins with an overview of the patterns of usage of French, the official language, and the six vernaculars spoken by 90% of the population and designated as national languages: Wolof, Pulaar, Serer, Diola, Malinke, and Soninke. Recent strong interest in promoting national languages and literacy is discussed. Wolof has become the normal trading language and its speakers number as high as 80% or more of the population. A matrix follows that rates these seven languages on: (1) their usage rating using State Department classifications; (2) increase and decrease trends by the year 2000; (3) chief of state use in addressing the populace; (4) use in armed forces, government, court, and diplomatic communications, written and oral; (5) use as a language of instruction or required language in higher education, on the secondary and elementary levels, and in adult education; (6) use in the popular press, radio and television broadcasting, and film; (7) business and professional use, written and oral; (8) use in intellectual circles; (9) the alphabet situation; (10) the status of indigenous literature; (11) use in public signs and notices; and (12) the availability of instructional materials and dictionaries in the native languages for use in English as a second language. Explanatory notes give the number and population percentages using the languages, the type of alphabet used, and specific instructional materials titles. A selected bibliography is also included. (MSE)

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Language/Area Reference Center

COUNTRY STATUS REPORT:

SENEGAL

June 1984

Prepared by:

Thea C. Bruhn

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

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Center for Applied Linguistics
3520 Prospect Street, NW
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Senegal - 1, Overview

French is the official language of Senegal. Six vernaculars have been given the status of "national" languages: Wolof, Pulaar, Serer, Diola, Malinke, and Soninke. This designation does not accord any sort of official status to these languages and what it may in fact mean is somewhat vague. These six languages account for about ninety percent of native language speakers in Senegal. The remaining ten percent speak a variety of other vernaculars as first languages.

Of the national languages, Malinke is utilised as a lingua franca in the Casamance region. Pulaar, Serer, Diola, and Soninke are essentially ethnic group languages. All of the national languages are used in radio and television for a limited amount of programming hours. Wolof, however, is the language used most extensively as the national radio service broadcasts more that fifty percent of the time in it.

The present government in Senegal has taken an active interest in promoting the national languages. It has promised to institute universal primary school education by 1990, accelerating the use of the national languages as a medium of instruction. Several experimental preschool classes in Wolof were instituted in the late seventies. There is a strong interest in promoting adult literacy in the national languages. Until now, adult literacy efforts have been largely in French, Wolof and a limited amount in Pulaar and Serer. The movement toward the use of the national languages in the schools is a clear sign of movement toward greater cultural nationalism.

French is used for all official and administrative purposes, for commerce and industry at the national level, for agriculture, law, banking, tourism, and formal education. Wolof, however, has become the normal trading language and is the principal means for communication across ethnic lines. In fact, the number of speakers of Wolof is estimated as high as eighty percent or more of the population. Although French is the official language, Wolof is essentially the language most frequently used. The extent to which Wolof has been adopted by members of other ethnic groups in Senegal is somewhat remarkable.

The spread of the Wolof language has produced something of a national culture in social and linguistic terms. There is a movement among many Senegalese intellectuals to have Wolof replace French as the national language and the official working language of the state bureaucracy. This may reflect a desire to assert a distinctly Senegalese national identity. Meanwhile, Senegalese culture remains somewhat divided in that the educated urban elite is very French influenced while, in general, cultural and social structures throughout much of the country are relatively unaffected by French culture.

Although Senegal is an islamic country, with about eighty percent of the population as Muslims, Arabic does not play a significant role in the country's language situation. Few Senegalese use Arabic apart from religious ritual, and it is spoken natively only by the small Lebanese-Syrian minority in Senegal.

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Senegal - 2, Use Matrix

SENEGAL

Languages

Factoids	French	Wolof	Pulaar	Serer	Diola	Malinke	Soninke
1. Usage rating*	2	3	3	3	4	4	4
2. Increase/decrease	2	1	2	2	2	2	2
3. Chief of State use?	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
4. Armed Forces/written	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
5. Armed Forces/oral	1	1	4	4	4	4	4
6. Government/written	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
7. Government/oral, national	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
8. Government/oral, local	1	3	0	0	0	0	0
9. Court/written	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
10. Court/oral	1	3	0	0	0	0	0
11. Diplomatic use?	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
12. Higher education	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
13. Higher ed: required?	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
14. Secondary education	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
15. Secondary: required?	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
16. Primary education	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
17. Primary: required?	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
18. Adult education	1	3	4	4	0	0	0
19. Popular press use	1	2	0	0	0	0	0
20. Transmission across borders?	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
21. Use in radio broadcasting	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
22. Use in TV broadcasting	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
23. Use in film	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
24. Business/professional/written	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
25. Business/professional/oral	1	1	3	3	3	3	3
26. Use in intellectual circles	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
27. Alphabet situation*	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
28. Status of literature	1	2	2	?	?	?	?
29. Use in signs?	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
30. Teaching materials*	1	2	2	0	0	2	2
31. Bilingual dictionaries*	1	2	2	0	0	0	0

Notes:

Matrix figures are explained on following pages

? = information unavailable within time frame of project

- = not applicable

* = footnotes on following pages

FOOTNOTES

1. 1984 ESTIMATES, NUMBERS OF NATIVE SPEAKERS

Language	Number of native speakers	Percentage of population
French	62,600	1.0
Wolof	2,628,600	42.0
Pulaar	1,195,400	19.1
Serer	938,800	15.0
Diola	425,600	6.8
Malinke	388,000	6.2
Soninke	156,500	2.5

27. TYPE OF ALPHABET USED

Language	Alphabet
French	Roman
Wolof	Roman with additional characters
Pulaar	Roman with additional characters
Serer	Roman with additional characters
Diola	Roman with additional characters
Malinke	Roman with additional characters
Soninke	Roman with additional characters

30. TEACHING MATERIALS FOR ENGLISH SPEAKERS

Language	Texts
Wolof	Abdulay, Jann and Felipe Tejeda. Intermediate Wolof Textbook. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University, Department of Linguistics, 1980.
	Cham, Mbye B. and Mallafe Drame. Na nu jangg Wolof. Wolof Grammar and Textbook. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, African Studies Program, 1981.
	Gaye, Pape Amadou. Practical Course in Wolof: An Audio-Aural Approach. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Peace Corps, 1980.
Pulaar	Pelletier, Corinne A. and Neil Skinner. Adamawa Fulfulde: An Introductory Course. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin-Madison, African Studies Program, 1979.
	Swift, Lloyd B. et. al. Fula Basic Course. Washington, D.C.: Foreign Service Institute, Department of State, 1975

30. TEACHING MATERIALS FOR ENGLISH SPEAKERS (continued)

Language	Texts
Malinke	Sosseh, Hayib and Bob Ning Momodou. A Basic Mandinka Course with cultural notes. Banjul, The Gambia: U.S. Peace Corps, n.d. [197-].
	Spears, Richard A. Elementary Maninka-kan. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University, Department of Linguistics, 1973.
Soninke	Kendall, Martha B. et. al. Soninke: Communication and Culture Handbook (Peace Corps Language Handbook Series). Brattleboro, VT: The Experiment in International Living, 1980.

31. DICTIONARIES FOR ENGLISH SPEAKERS

Language	Text
Wolof	Zins, John. A Short English-Wolof Lexicon. Dakar, Senegal: U.S. Peace Corps-Senegal, 1977.
Pulaar	Dictionnaire Elementaire: Fulfulde-Francais-English. Niamey, Niger: C.R.D.T.O., 1971.
	Taylor, Frank William. A Fulani-English Dictionary. Oxford, England: Clarendon Press, 1932.

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Cruise-O'Brien, Rita. Professionalism in Broadcasting: Case Studies of Algeria and Senegal. Brighton, England: University of Sussex, Institute of Development Studies, 1976.

Dumont, Pierre. Le francais et les langues africaines au Senegal. Paris: Editions Karthala and A.C.C.T., 1983.

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N'Diaye-Correard, Genevieve. "Le Senegal," in Inventaire des etudes linguistiques sur les pays d'Afrique noire d'expression francaise et sur Madagascar. Paris: Conseil International de la Langue Francaise, 1978.

Nelson, Harold D. et. al. Area Handbook for Senegal. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1974.

Turcotte, Denis. La politique linguistique en Afrique francophone. Quebec: Les Presses de l'Universite Laval, 1981.

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Explanation of Matrix Figures - a

1. Usage rating, using the State Department classifications
   1: Official language, most widely used.
   2: Official language, not most widely used.
   3: Widely used language, but not official. (Over 10% of population)
   4: Unofficial language used by significant minority (but less than 3)
   5: Unofficial language used by influential minority
   FOOTNOTE: NUMBERS OF SPEAKERS, PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL POPULATION

2. Increase/decrease trends by the year 2000
   1: Number of native speakers will increase in proportion
   2: Number of native speakers will remain proportionally constant
   3: Number of native speakers will decrease in proportion

3. Chief of State use, in addressing populace: YES (1) NO (0)

4. Armed Forces written communications
   1: Only language used in official communiques
   2: One of the languages used in official communiques
   0: Not used in official communiques

5. Armed Forces oral communications
   1: Used on all levels
   2: Used among officers only
   3: Used among multi-lingual NCO's and troops
   4: Used among monolingual troops only
   0: Not used

6. Written government communications
   1: Only language used in official communications
   2: One of the languages used in official communications
   0: Not used in official communications

7. Oral government communications/national level
   1: Official language spoken in national assembly
   2: One of the official languages spoken in national assembly
   0: Not used in government

8. Oral government communications/local level
   1: Official language in local government
   2: One of the official languages used in local government
   3: Allowed in local government proceedings, translated into official language
   0: Not used in local government

9. Court use in written communications
   1: Only language used in official communications
   2: One of the languages used in official communications
   0: Not used

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Explanation of Matrix Figures - b

10. Court use in oral communications
    1: Only official language used in court
    2: One of the official languages used in court
    3: Allowed in courts, translated into official language(s)
    0: Not used in courts

11. Diplomatic use in notes to other countries: YES (1) NO (0)

12. Use in higher education
    1: Official medium of instruction
    2: Unofficial medium of instruction
    0: Not used

13. Language taught as subject in required courses in higher education:
    YES (1) NO (0)

14. Use in secondary education
    1: Official medium of instruction
    2: Unofficial medium of instruction
    0: Not used as medium of instruction

15. Language taught as subject in required courses on secondary level?
    YES (1) NO (0)

16. Use in primary education
    1: Official medium of instruction
    2: Unofficial medium of instruction
    0: Not used as medium of instruction

17. Language taught as subject in required courses on primary level?
    YES (1) NO (0)

18. Language use in adult education
    1: Used in oral and written technical instruction
    2: Used in oral and written life skills instruction
    3: Used in oral life skills instruction
    4: Used in literacy classes only
    0: Not used in adult informal education

19. Language use in popular press
    1: Used in publications throughout country
    2: Used in centrally-based publications with national distribution
    3: Used only in regional and local publications
    4: Used in clandestine publications only
    0: Not used

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Explanation of Matrix Figures - c

20. Language used in radio/TV transmission across national borders?
YES (1) NO (0)

21. Language use in radio broadcasting
1: Language used broadcasting thoughout country
2: Language used in centrally-based national broadcasts
3: Language used in local broadcasting only
3: Language used in clandestine broadcasting only
0: Language not used in radio broadcasting

22. Language use in TV broadcasting
1: Language used in telecasting throughout country
2: Language used in centrally-based national telecasting
3: Language used regional and local telecasting only
0: Language not used in TV

23. Language use in film
1: Language used in indigenous film-making
2: Foreign-language films dubbed/subtitled into language
0: Language not used in films

24. Business/Professional use - written
1: Sole official language in business and professional communications
2: One of the official languages in business and professional communication
0: Not used

25. Business/Professional use - oral
1: Used in trade and commerce throughout country
2: Used in national trade and commerce only
3: Used only in local trade and commerce

26. Language use in intellectual circles
1: Language used in indigenous scholarly publications
2: Language used in formal scholarly discussion
0: Language not used

27. Alphabet situation
1: Established standardized alphabet exists.
2: Alphabet developed, no standardization
3: Competing alphabets exist
0: No alphabet exists
FOOTNOTE: TYPE OF ALPHABET USED

28. Status of indigenous literature
1: Established written tradition exists
2: Literature tradition emerging
3: Popular literature exists
0: No written literature exists

29. Language used in official public signs, notices: YES (1) NO (0)

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Explanation of Matrix Figures - d

30. Teaching materials for English speakers
    1: Wide range of teaching materials exists
    2: Narrow range of teaching materials exists
    0: No teaching materials exist
    FOOTNOTE: SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

31. Dictionaries for English speakers
    1: Wide range of bilingual dictionaries exists
    2: Narrow range of dictionaries exists
    0: No dictionaries exist
    FOOTNOTE: SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY